

THE TOP SECRET AIR FORCE DETECTION PLAN

By Fran Ridge

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Decades before MADAR was even thought of, the United States Air Force had a Top Secret plan to detect UFOs and obtain electronic as well as photographic information. We first discovered this Top Secret project while updating the 1952 chrono in 2005 and thought the idea was for the Air Force to simply eliminate anecdotal accounts from witnesses and eventually get rid of Project Blue Book. But I personally consider another real possibility that, with Roswell being a real event and UFOs now being accepted as real, it made sense that the Air Force wanted to keep better tabs on UFO activity, especially after the sobering massive UFO wave of 1952

At least as early as January 3rd, 1952 somebody in the Air Force clearly demonstrated the knowledge of the problem and reality of UFOs. It is my opinion that the Pentagon knew of the reality as early as Roswell in the summer of 1947 and that's when the cover-up began. But that's another story. What you are about to read here is supported by documentation, some of which will be provided later in 2022.

Project Grudge (2/11/49), which had replaced the original Project SIGN (1/22/48), had publicly denounced the reality of the phenomena for those first years. But that all changed when Project Blue Book replaced Grudge in September of 1951. But there was more to it than just Blue Book. It was higher than that.

[January 3, 1952, SECRET Memo](#)

Brig. Gen. William M. Garland, Assistant for the Production of Intelligence, wrote a memorandum for General Samford, Director of Air Force Intelligence, with the title (SECRET). The subject, "Contemplated Action to Determine the Nature and Origin of the Phenomena Connected with the Reports of Unusual Flying Objects." (Courtesy, Joel Carpenter)

Jan 29, 1952

Captain Edward Ruppelt, Project Blue Book's director, on a trip to the Pentagon to brief Gen. Garland, visited the offices of AF Intelligence (AFOIN) having collections of UFO files, and discovered that they had more complete files than did ATIC in Dayton, and he arranged to have copies made of the various missing files made for him at Project Grudge at ATIC (though multiple visits were required to obtain the copies and Ruppelt probably did not succeed in getting everything). These AFOIN offices with UFO files included the Technical Capabilities Branch (TCB) of the Evaluation Division (AFOIN-TCB or AFOIV-TC) and the Collection Control Branch of the Collection Division (AFOIN-CC or AFOIC-CC). (Brad Sparks)

The best reports going somewhere else was suspected (and understandable) but this information precedes what we found in 1979 with the [Bolender document](#) in 1979. It amounted to confirmation of a long-standing suspicion: Project Blue Book served as a front for a classified project that handled the truly sensitive reports. The memo was prepared on October 20, 1969 by Brig. Gen. C. H. Bolender, the Air Force's Deputy Director of Development. It was clear: UFO sightings that involved national security were not part of the Blue Book system!

Now with that serious backdrop, here is where we get into a Top Secret project that will surprise a lot of people

Jan. 29th, 1952

There was a briefing mentioned in Project Grudge Status Report No. 3. In it it mentioned that Brig. Gen. William M. Garland, Assistant for (Intelligence) Production, and his staff at the Directorate of Intelligence, HQ USAF, were briefed on the status of the Project Grudge UFO Study. At this meeting Gen. Garland introduced a revolutionary new intelligence policy and methodology which emphasized the use of instrumentation for intelligence collection, including to detect and track UFO's (which would eventually be the basis for terminating Project BLUE BOOK as an intelligence function, converting it to a PR psych war propaganda function beginning in July 1952 over a 6-month transition period - Brad Sparks).

As an interim last-chance measure to prove whether anecdotal sightings had any value, Gen. Garland approved of Ruppelt's publicity plan to draw in UFO reports from the public so that triangulations might be obtained, and this led to Garland secretly backing the LIFE magazine article.

On the same date, Jan. 29, Gen. Garland gave the welcoming address to the SECRET compartmented MIT Project BEACON HILL in Cambridge, Mass., where he gave the marching orders to the assembled scientists to study ways AF intelligence methodology can be revolutionized through use of technology.

Mid-March 1952

AF Intelligence (AFOIN) Assistant for (Intelligence) Production Brig. Gen. William M. Garland initiated a TOP SECRET compartmented project (to be designed and built by AF R&D) to establish a global instrumented UFO detection and tracking system that would obviate the need for non-technical anecdotal UFO sighting reports, eventually resulting in approval of an official AF policy to deemphasize or reject anecdotal UFO reports (July 28, 1952). (Brad Sparks)

March 19, 1952

Ruppelt briefed General Benjamin W. Chidlaw, then the Commanding General of the Air Defense Command, and his staff, telling them about Blue Book's plan. They agreed with it in principle and suggested that he work out the details with the Director of Intelligence for the ADC, Brigadier W. M. Burgess. General Burgess designated Major Verne Sadowski of his staff to be the ADC liaison officer with New Grudge.

March 26, 1952

Gen. Garland sent ATIC Technical Analysis Division Chief, Col. Sanford H. Kirkland, and Project Blue Book Chief, Lt. Edward J. Ruppelt, to brief MIT's Project BEACON HILL on UFO's. (Brad Sparks)

April 4, 1952

Gen. Garland arranged for the AF-Rand Corp. Satellite Project to receive a UFO briefing from Ruppelt on a visit to ATIC. Ruppelt met and befriended Rand satellite engineer, Jim Thompson. (Brad Sparks)

June 5, 1952

AF Intelligence initiated a series of internal Staff Studies on UFO's, inspired by Gen. Garland's new policy emphasizing instrumentation, which was circulated within AFOIN and its field element ATIC. Staff Studies led to policy and project plan approved by Director of Intelligence, Gen. Samford, on July 28. (Brad Sparks)

July 10-17, 1952 Dr. Kaplan Visits ATIC Project Blue Book

UCLA Geophysics Prof. Joseph Kaplan, a member of the AF Scientific Advisory Board previously involved with a highly secret compartmented UFO tracking project in 1949

leading to Project TWINKLE, visits ATIC and Project BLUE BOOK, advising on plans for a top scientific panel to establish the importance and credibility of the UFO problem within the scientific community (a later distorted version of the plan is forced on the CIA by the AF as the Robertson Panel and intentionally designed by the AF to fail spectacularly). The Battelle Memorial Institute scientists are deemed not prominent enough to secure support within the scientific community, but will continue with statistical studies of BLUE BOOK's case files (ordered by Gen. Samford in Dec 1951 to specifically verify Ruppelt's sighting pattern analysis, showing UFO concentrations around atomic weapons bases, after his briefing disturbed Samford). Battelle also continues special lab analyses of alleged UFO physical evidence from time to time. (Brad Sparks)

Oct. 23, 1952

RadTelex. A Blue Book UFO briefing for the entire Los Alamos Scientific Lab. Afterwards Dr. Crew pulled together a group of Los Alamos personnel to meet privately with Ruppelt and Col. Bower to discuss radiation UFO evidence and info they had from (Mt.) Palomar, Los Alamos, and Oak Ridge on possible and actual UFO radiation incidents there. (See also Dec. 2 memo)

Nov. 4, 1952

Capt. E. J. Ruppelt and Lt. R. M. Olsson visited Col. Hood, Chief of Nuclear Powered Aircraft Branch of WADC. Col. Hood had contacted ATIC in regard to certain sightings of UFO's at Oak Ridge National Laboratory in which he and a Naval officer had attempted to obtain correlation between sightings and peaks in radiation backgrounds. There are indications that there may be some correlation present between unknown radar pickups and rises in radiation

Dec. 15, 1952

Memo for the record. Capt. Ruppelt's call to Homer T. Gittings, Jr. concerning visual sightings of UFOs and radiation of unknown sources, reference to Mt. Palomar. A Mr. W. W. Carter of Los Alamos, New Mexico, was the person who knew people at Mt. Palomar who had seen unidentified aerial objects at the same time they had detected some radiation.

December 23, 1952

Letter from Office of Naval Research, Pasadena Branch to Chief of Naval Research. Details on old report of unusual phenomena concerning erratic (geiger counter) equipment behavior at Palomar.

Dec. 29, 1952

Preparation for trip to Los Alamos, N.M., and the West Coast. Capt. Ruppelt had called Lt. Col. Paul H. Butman, Division of Military Applications, Atomic Energy Commission, Washington, D.C. Col. Butman had previously been briefed on the possible correlation between detection of radiation from unknown sources and unidentified flying objects by Capt. Ruppelt during a visit to AEC. Col. Butman was requested to contact Los Alamos laboratories and request that Mr. Carter, Mr. Gittings, and Mr. Simmons come to Albuquerque for an interrogation.

Jan 9, 1953

SECRET letter to Miles Goll from H. C. Cross (PENTICLE MEMO) describing a large-scale military plan recommended to ATIC to entrap UFOs to secure evidence at high incident areas. This just a week before the CIA-sponsored meetings of Jan 14-16.

My search for data in the NICAP chronos took me to 1970 without any mentions of the plan after January 9th, 1953. So I asked Brad if we had missed something that wasn't placed on the chronos and if the project had gone more covert.

He told me the Air Force project became more sensitive and higher in classification. He suspects there are broken links in the 1969-70 chronos, like on the Bolender Memo and

BB closure that may have more data. He also thought he might have some entries in 1959-63 chronos on documents referring to UFO incidents "bypassing the BB system" long before the phrase was used (reused) in the Bolender Memo in Oct 1969. Col Friend confirmed to him in March 2000 that this meant UFOs tracked by classified sensor systems BB was not privy to. The CIA "Father of Satellite Reconnaissance" former CIA Deputy Director for Plans, Richard Bissell told him that plans for infrared satellite tracking of UFOs were in development in the 50s early 60s when he was in satellite work at the CIA.

In Aug 1956 long before he came to NICAP, Dick Hall heard over the radio a leaked AF report that two satellites (actually two types) would be used to track UFOs. This was probably the greatest leak of classified UFO info in all history but its significance was missed by Hall and others who kept trying to force this report into the irrelevant and pitiful grapefruit-sized public Vanguard satellite plans, unaware that the relevant classified AF plans were for massive multi-ton 20-foot satellites. In 1955-56, Lockheed and RAND realized that the one type of satellite, the tv camera version (going back to Gen Garland March 1952), was impossible because it required massive data rates and could not image moving aircraft or UFOs -- even today this is impossible. The second type, the infrared sensor satellite, was viable because it looked for hotspot heat sources and only transmitted that highly relevant data, ignoring the irrelevant cool earth background which was massively repetitive and useless. The infrared sats became operational in 1970 enabling the AF to finally close BB. There was also continental-sized radar beam coverage by OTH (Over The Horizon) radars transferred to NORAD in 1968 (not the limited 200-300-mile range of typical NORAD radars, but OTH of lower resolution and with other issues. (Sparks).

So, nothing in the NICAP data after January of 1953? Well, that's what we had thought until I found some additional, and very important information which I had mentioned in my most recent book, "Cap Point". We have to thank, Australian researcher, Paul Dean, and American researchers, Barry Greenwood and Brad Sparks for the following blockbuster information. I had mentioned in my book that it was unfortunate that we did not have a more comprehensive list of UFO sightings from Vietnam along with case directories and case summaries as we did for sightings in Korea, but the many sightings in Vietnam strongly suggested there was a potential for an escalation that might have lead to a nuclear confrontation with the super powers. UFO reports were consistently being collected and investigated, in various forms, with the primary purpose being to determine whether or not these events were related to enemy activity. Often they were not. So far, from just a few reports Paul Dean found, Brad Sparks compiled some stats on about 500 UFO Sensor Trackings by Radar-Visual, Laser Range-Finder, Video Camera, Night Scope, and Infrared in 1968-69.

Sparks: "Except for 2 probable helicopters shot down, on June 16 & 17, 1968, this network was completely unable to identify **any** of the other 500 tracks or so. The stats are an incredible 99.6% Unknowns, IFO's 0.4%. To help the IFO cause so to speak, a conservative guesstimate of maybe 5 IFO's in the uncertain early phase in mid-June 1968 would make this 99% Unknowns, 1% IFO's, a devastating statistic. These are from INSTRUMENT SENSORS. No more hopeless reliance on mere human anecdotal evidence. The 7th AF history clearly states it was about "UFO's" NOT about helicopters, it only began initially with "unidentified helicopters" as of around June 15-16, 1968. But it took a deadly turn with the friendly fire of anti-aircraft missiles hitting a ship (Aussie HMAS Hobart) instead of aircraft (helicopters). Then they realized it was UFO's...Now we have two brand new codenames for UFO sensor tracking networks: HAVE FEAR and LETHAL CHASE."

At this point it is important to bring up a few incidents that occurred BEFORE 1952. Most researchers are aware of some of them, but NOT aware that they involved a planned, deliberate, top secret program.

[Late Aug. 1947?, Alamogordo \[Holloman\] Army Air Field, New Mexico.](#)

Document evidence shows that the secret program to track and image UFOs began at least in August of 1947, a month after Roswell. Someone knew where to look for an object 200 miles up! We don't know the time but, AMC Watson Labs Project MOGUL tracked a stationary target at 200 miles altitude using a modified CPS-4 height-finder radar aimed at 70° elevation. Normally CPS-4 requires a crew of 6 operators so there may have been other witnesses. (Incidentally, the report was deliberately leaked out by the Air Force). Project SIGN sent two high-level investigators, but the prime witnesses were conveniently not available. The CPS-4 radar had been specially "modified" for the specific purpose of extending its 90-mile range to some 250 miles and to point it almost straight up into outer space to look for targets -- and then it did exactly that. It was a long time before we were able to put satellites up that high, and they had to orbit at 18,000 mph. This object HOVERED at that altitude!. We always assumed UFOs were being seen by civilians and ALSO members of the military. Now we know that the Navy and the Air Force were actively making an effort to see them and record data from the outset.

[1949 Army UFO Tracking Network](#)

If you click on the link above and go to pages 43-44, the section "Ruppelt Coverup No. 1", Brad Sparks will provide a more detailed description of the 1949 Army UFO Observation Plan. Briefly, since Captain Ruppelt claimed that "many people" knew and talked about the Army plan with him it is evident that many people would also have known it was actually tracking UFOs, generating reports and leaving a paper trail through Army and Air Force intelligence, security and R&D channels. Brad Sparks: " So 'many' people undoubtedly heard a lot through the grapevine inasmuch as a wide variety of agencies, including the FBI, AEC/AESS, AFSWP, AFOSI, and even the Navy, were involved in regular classified briefings on the UFO events in Texas and New Mexico." Ruppelt publicly had claimed the plan was killed. But he could not honestly claim not knowing about the Army network's UFO sighting reports in his own Project Grudge files, which of course prove that the Army network was very much alive. As Ruppelt said on page 56 of his own book, "The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects", "The [Army] reports were getting to ATIC." Sparks: "On June 23, 1949, Air Force Director of Intelligence Gen Charles P. Cabell's exec wrote 'By Command of the Chief of Staff' to AMC/Project Grudge that the Fourth Army's Proceedings of the UFO History Workshop 44 May 19 request for AMC to send a technical observing team to Killeen Base was approved 'as a field exercise.' The Air Force not only knew that the Fourth Army was establishing a secret UFO triangulation observation network, but that it was already in operation, and so the Air Force authorized AMC/Grudge to notify Air Force Bases in the vicinity to spread the word!

[April 27, 1950; White Sands, New Mexico film](#)

In his book, Ruppelt claimed that there was no triangulation conducted in the "impressive" White Sands Proving Ground cine-theodolite case. According to him, only one theodolite tracked the UFO (pp. 52, 88-9, 212-3). See Brad Sparks detailed explanation on pages on page 44-45 in the link above. Ruppelt: "About all the film proved was that something was in the air and whatever it was, it was moving" (p. 88). As Brad makes clear, two Askania theodolite stations, M-7 and P-10, did track the UFO on April 27 and the base mathematician, Wilbur L. Mitchell and Capt. Perry Bryant, chief of the Data Reduction Unit. effected triangulation. Sparks: "This proves that Ruppelt knew about their analyses of the two filming incidents. In fact, Ruppelt had in his Grudge files the original data reduction report of May 15, 1950, which revealed that in the April 27 incident the four close-together UFOs had been tracked by two missile-tracking stations, P-10 and M-7, one taking missile-tracking photo-theodolite movie film of all four UFOs together, and so they did get an accurate triangulation, which revealed: "The objects were at an altitude of approximately 150,000 feet... over the Holloman range between the base and Tularosa Peak... The objects were approximately 30 feet in diameter... traveling at an undeterminable [sic], yet high speed." Despite the fact that Ruppelt had read all the reports and even spoke about the analysts involved, he then falsely claimed, "If two or more cameras photograph the same object, it is possible to obtain a very accurate

measurement of the photographed object's altitude, speed, and size. Project Twinkle was a bust. Absolutely nothing was photographed." (p. 52). It has been proven beyond a doubt by documentation that film, including triangulation, was obtained on April 27, 1950. And again on May 24 and Aug. 31.

The evidence is clear. While the Air Force publicly played down UFOs, up until the time Project Blue Book was shut down in January of 1970, serious top secret work was being conducted. In the very beginning Project SIGN scientists were purged out because they were "believers". Project Grudge hired personnel who were trained and operated under the consensus that "whatever you see or hear, don't believe it". But as you saw earlier, somebody just didn't want the public to know about it but yet needed the public to report what the systems were picking up.

The most recent find concerning UFO detection occurred during [Operation Foal Eagle](#) in South Korea in 2003. This may have been a discovery that was later used in a detection mode, but it sure made it clear how UFOs were coming and going. I later published a [list of vertical ascents and descents](#) from Blue Book files. All this seems to confirm how our MADAR system works in the first place. Objects come in or leave in a burst of energy. But they can operate IN our atmosphere under idling conditions.

The civilian attempts to track UFOs began with Project Starlight International in Texas (1964). The detection system I developed at Vincennes, Indiana (1970) later became known as MADAR at Mt. Vernon, Indiana in 1973 and was moderately successful. These singular attempts were ramped up to the world-wide MADAR-III system which my team made operational in 2018 which now operates at 120 sites around the globe, including a dozen foreign countries. The idea from day one was similar to the Air Force Plan in 1952 in which we make every attempt possible to solicit sightings from the public in our attempt to correlate potential sightings of interest with processed MADAR anomalies. In the last three years we have been very successful.

The MADAR Project incorporates a magnetometer, an electronic compass, and an accelerometer, but we encourage ops to invest in a geiger counter based on what happened at Mt. Palomar in the 1950's and what occurred with [MADAR and the "WOW!" Signal](#) on August 15, 1977.

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